

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Centers for Regional Excellence

Collaborating Communities are Competitive Communities

General Background Description

During her State of the State message in 2004, Governor Granholm called on local communities to think regionally: “So now is the time for quiet courageous local leadership to get beyond turf and politics to promote efficiency and stretch dollars to maximize services to the public...to consider new partnerships with one another: pooling resources, sharing services, technology, office space, even employees. I applaud those local units of government who have torn up turf and replaced it with creativity and collaboration.” Since then, many communities have formed regional coalitions for purposes of better land use planning, providing more cost-effective and efficient services and/or maintaining services they might otherwise lose. *Collaborating communities are competitive communities.*

What is the Centers for Regional Excellence Program?

Over the past six months, a committee of representatives from the Governor’s office, Department of Labor and Economic Growth, MSHDA, MML, MTA, MAC, several Michigan universities and others interested in regional collaboration have worked together to craft a program to help Michigan communities succeed in their cooperative efforts. This is a direct response to communities that have expressed interest in regional collaboration but are stymied by a lack of models, technical information, help in moving the process along and funding needed for implementation. The goal of the program is to increase instances of collaboration in order to help Michigan communities be more competitive: reduce duplication of services, increase cost savings, maintain services that might otherwise be cut and be more efficient and effective government operations. The program’s objective is to support models of collaboration that might ultimately be replicable for like situations in the future; help communities tackle barriers to collaboration through technical assistance, outside mediation/facilitation, and use of best practice; and encourage interesting/complex examples of collaboration.

The Centers for Regional Excellence Program seeks multiple communities in one area who will commit to formal agreements on regional collaboration. A lead entity will apply on behalf of the collaboration. Funded through a grant from MSHDA, the program anticipates selecting 5 pilots. Grants will extend over a two year period, with the expectation for regular progress reporting by the lead entity.

What is Available to Pilots?

- A grant of up to \$25,000, distributed over two years, to aid in costs related to implementation of combining/coordinating services, such as payment of a project leader, new equipment systems, etc. State funds cannot be used for studies and planning consultants.
- A brief general primer on building successful collaborations gathered from information provided by communities throughout Michigan who have put together ongoing successful programs
- Access to facilitators and research assistants, where necessary, from a Michigan university

- Access to mentors from around Michigan who have already participated in successful collaborations
- Priority access to a variety of state grants and services for collaborative use that are applicable to the collaborative process
- A website providing information on collaboration and model documents
- Assistance with messaging and working with your constituencies

What Must The Successful Applicant Provide To The Review Committee?

- Threshold requirement: each participating governmental unit (including school districts if applicable) must provide a resolution expressing support for regional cooperation and a commitment to participate in a committee to pursue collaborative projects. This resolution does not commit the community to any specific project. The resolution must accompany the proposal. A model resolution is attached to this RFP
- Listing of the participants collaboration committee, including
 - One representative from each local government involved
 - Local stakeholders/community partners, such as chambers of commerce, banking community, major employers, nonprofit organizations, local school districts or ISDs, universities or community colleges, faith-based organizations, ethnic groups, community and constituency groups, local media, foundations, labor unions, etc.
- Letter of support from each participating nongovernmental stakeholder
- Description of strategies for community engagement in a visioning process
- Statement of proposed activities, including
 - Why this project is important to this region
 - Explanation of barriers to cooperation
 - Discussion of expected benefits/results
- Explanation of how progress will be measured
- Explanation of how the proposal will be implemented—an abbreviated action plan
- Two year timeline
- Budget: amount requested and specifically how state funds will be used
- Identification of spokesperson/leader of group along with contact information
- Identification of technical leader(s), if necessary (For example, if the project involves an area-wide dispatch system or fire authority, which public safety official(s) will oversee the technical aspects of the project.)
- Identification of fiduciary
- Local funding partners, such as foundations or banks, and the dollar amount, if committed, and how this money will be used.
- Commitment of local dollars and in-kind services
- Semi-annual progress reports

Priority Considerations

- Number and variety in types of communities involved (cities, townships, villages, counties; urban, suburban and rural areas)
- Diversity and number of community stakeholders participating, in addition to government representatives

- Likelihood of project success and sustainability
- Significant benefits to participating communities
- Commitment of leaders
- Emphasis on implementation (vs. planning) for use of pilot grant funds
- Commitment of resources from local funding partners
- Centers that propose more unique forms of collaboration and those that appear to offer the greatest positive impact over time.
- Early success in identifying and overcoming roadblocks

Examples of Collaborative Activities

Police and fire, dispatch, recreation and cultural activities, water and sewer, environmental protection/development, incinerator authorities, shared buildings, combined agencies (housing, health, etc.), training, capacity maintenance, transit, GIS, purchasing, planning, economic development, employee sharing, wastewater treatment, urban growth boundaries and land use planning, computer/server sharing, payroll, animal control, public maintenance, telecommunications, etc. *Be creative!*

Eligible Applicants

- Any local unit of government, including DDA, authority, school district or ISD
- A participating nonprofit organization, such as those found on the list of potential stakeholders above

Program Timeline:

December 14: Proposals Due

February 10: Announcement of Pilots

Proposals and supporting documents should be mailed to:

RFP—Centers for Regional Excellence
ATTN: Ms. Elizabeth Armstrong
Department of Labor and Economic Growth
Director's Office, 4th Floor
611 Ottawa Street
P.O Box 30004
Lansing, MI 48909

Email/phone contacts:

cre@michigan.gov

Maxine Berman

(313)456 0025

Web site address:

www.michigan.gov/cre

Workshop information:

We will hold a state-wide workshop on Friday, November 4, which you can participate in by call-in and/or webcast. Check the website nearer to the date for phone number and computer connection.

**MODEL RESOLUTION
CENTERS FOR REGIONAL EXCELLENCE**

A resolution supporting regional collaboration efforts

Whereas service to our constituents is our reason for existence and we recognize that the services we offer are important to the fabric of our community and often attract people to move here, and

Whereas regional collaboration may be one avenue to pursue to maintain or enhance some of the services we now offer, and

Whereas regional collaboration may afford us flexibility in our budgeting without diminishing the way of life in our community, and

Whereas regional collaboration may help us save money as well as providing effective and efficient services, and

Whereas regional collaboration has proved in many areas to be an effective land use tool, and

Whereas regional collaboration may help both our region and our own community be more economically competitive,

Now therefore be it resolved that (your community's name) agrees to participate in the Centers for Regional Excellence program to pursue the potential for regional collaboration in our area, and

Be it further resolved that (your community's name) will send a representative to participate in these discussions, and

Be it further resolved that the citizens of (your community's name) will be kept fully informed and provided opportunities for input into the process.

Resolution adopted on (date).